



AT Reutilization Program For Independent Living *Recycled DME Program Expansion*

Paraquad, Inc. is pleased to announce the expansion of the Recycled Durable Medical Equipment (DME) Program to the Assistive Technology (AT) Reutilization Program providing assistive technology products, clinical services, and building a regional network of community collaborators to increase distribution.

Through a three-year grant awarded by the Rehabilitation Services Administration of the Office of Special Education and Rehabilitation Services the program will increase access to assistive technology devices and services for people with disabilities throughout the region.

The AT Reutilization Program is a one-stop clearinghouse acquiring, repairing and distributing recycled durable medical equipment. AT devices include manual wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, scooters, canes, crutches, walkers, shower chairs, toilet seats, recreational devices, seating cushions, and back supports. The program also includes education and outreach efforts, clinical service processes, and a regional network of community collaborators.

Paraquad is pleased to continue our collaborative relationship with the Program in Occupational Therapy at Washington University School of Medicine.

The AT Reutilization Program community collaborators include Delta Center for Independent Living, Disability Resource Association, Impact, Linc, and Wheels for the World. Through these collaborations, the program service area includes eastern Missouri—Crawford, Franklin, Gasconade, Iron, Lincoln, St. Charles, St. Francois, St. Louis, St. Louis City, Washington and Warren counties and western Illinois—Madison, Monroe, Randolph, and St. Clair.

AT Donations

We are currently seeking AT device donations from local hospitals, nursing homes, rehabilitation facilities, and private donors. Items are transported free of charge. In-kind AT donors will receive a letter for tax purposes.

Donated AT devices are repaired and refurbished equipment under the supervision of a certified repair technician.

AT Distribution

AT devices are available at a low cost. A listing of devices is obtainable



Repair Technician Mike Freehill provides adjustments to Bettina Jones' wheelchair.

online at www.paraquad.org and by mail. Availability of items are based on the equipment donated and may fluctuate greatly.

AT includes manual wheelchairs, power wheelchairs, scooters, canes, crutches, walkers, shower chairs, toilet seats, recreational devices, seating cushions, and back supports.

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Bob Funk

A Message from the Executive Director **Access To Transportation** ***If There Is A Bus Stop, There Must Be A Ride!***

Dear Readers,

Access to public transportation continues to be the cornerstone of independent living. In order to fully participate in the community, including socializing, seeking employment, participating politically, one must first have access to transportation.

Since 2000, we have seen a steady decline in accessible public transportation through inaccessible fixed bus routes, increased Call-A-Ride eligibility requirements, and most recently new transfer requirements for Call-A-Ride users. However, Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects individuals with a disability from discrimination by a public entity. "If there is a stop, there must be a ride!"

The majority of bus stops within the St. Louis Metro system, approximately 86%, are inaccessible and not in compliance with ADA guidelines. Fixed route inaccessibility centers on an inaccessible path of travel to the bus stop including a lack of curb cuts and cracked, broken, inaccessible sidewalks. Other inaccessible issues include the absence of a familiar point of reference. Under federal guidelines, the Call-A-Ride paratransit program was established to complement public transportation for

people with disabilities who are unable to access the fixed route system. When eligibility is denied to these individuals, they are left with no alternative and no public transportation. We believe that it is Metro's responsibility to create and implement a plan that will bring our public transportation system into compliance with federal guidelines. A compliance plan would produce the most desirable results for both Metro and people with disabilities using the Metro system. This plan should specify a time period in which all bus stops will be made accessible. At Paraquad we are committed to working towards this solution.

During the next year, we will be working to ensure that accessible transportation is available for all of the St. Louis community. Please join us and speak out in support for accessible public transportation. If you have a concern, complaint, or would like to get involved, contact Paraquad at 314/289-4200 (voice) or 314/289-4252 (tty).

Sincerely,

Robert J. Funk
Executive Director and CEO

Title II of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) protects individuals with a disability from discrimination by a public entity. "If there is a stop, there must be a ride!"

(continued from page 1 ... AT Reutilization Program)

AT Clinical Services

Paraquad has established a clinical team in collaboration with Washington University Program in Occupational Therapy to evaluate the current screening, assessment, and training processes of assistive technology distribution.

The clinical team evaluates persons receiving recycled or refurbished equipment for safety, fit, positioning, and function. Program staff develop a training program for persons that indicate further need for instruction upon assessment.

AT Cleaning Service

Individualized AT device cleaning services are available by appointment.

Funding for the AT Reutilization Program is provided by Emerson and the U.S. Department of Education.



For additional information about the AT Reutilization Program contact the Assistive Technology Center at **314/289-4200 (voice) or 314/289-4252 (tty)**



For Sale

Never been used **Ricon van lift** for full-size van is available for sale. Platform width is 31" and the overall width is 37". Owner will deliver lift in the St. Louis area. Selling price is \$2500 (negotiable). Contact John Price at 314-865-4838 for more information.

2 unit indoor **Bruno stairlift** with two straight rails, one 126" long and the other 80". Very good condition, purchased in 2003, used less than one year. Selling price is \$2600. Call 314-727-5656 or e-mail: dmberg@wustl.edu



For more information call Paraquad's Information and Referral Department at: **314/289-4200 (voice) or 314/289-4252 (tty)**

The Results Are In Paraquad Participants Complete Annual Quality Assurance Survey

Your opinion is important to us.

Each year Paraquad surveys our participants to ensure that consumers are receiving quality services and to receive feedback on our programs. The responses help us to better know the level of quality services we're providing and how we may continue to meet the needs of our participants. This year we received responses from 155 participants.

Participants responded to several statements about their quality of life, independent living skills, and overall thoughts of the quality of services they receive from Paraquad.

86% of respondents report that since working with Paraquad staff my quality of life has improved.

88% of respondents state that since working with Paraquad staff, I feel more hopeful/optimistic about the future.

95% of respondents would recommend Paraquad services to others.

Some of the participants shared the following comments:

"Without Paraquad I would have been in a nursing home the past 9 years instead of at home with my family."

"Because of Paraquad I do believe they helped me become more independent."

"I've been a member since 1999 and I haven't regretted a single minute of it."

Paraquad appreciates the time our participants took to complete the survey. The information received will help us to improve services and develop programs that increase independence for people with disabilities.

2006 Elections Demonstrate The Power Of The Disability Vote

By Michelle Bishop, Missouri Disability Vote Project Organizer

The 2006 mid-term elections far exceeded anyone's expectations. While pollsters were predicting high voter turnout for a non-presidential election (which typically yields around 40% turnout), early reports show that voter turnout was securely over the 50% mark in November. While the official numbers have yet to come in, speculation around St. Louis city and county predicted turnout in the greater St. Louis area

research as allowed by federal law is also suspected to have fueled high voter turnout in Missouri. Close races are generally credited with increasing voter turnout, and Missouri did not disappoint. McCaskill's win was cemented by approximately 40,000 votes, with the stem cell initiative passing by the even narrower margin of just over 20,000 votes.

This past November also witnessed the implementation of electronic voting systems throughout Missouri. Voting equipment varied by county, as election authorities were allowed to purchase any of a handful of machines certified by the Secretary of State for accuracy and accessibility. Electronic

voting was largely a success in Missouri, as the equipment had some isolated difficulties, to be expected with any changes to the system. Problems on Election Day were mainly attributed to operator error on the part of poll workers, paper ballots, and polling places requiring forms of identification not sanctioned by law (including photo ID and forms of identification bearing a signature).



2006 GOTV Year in Review

The Missouri Disability Vote Project had another successful year of getting out the disability vote statewide. The project reports that approximately 47,000 of its 64,000 identified potential voters were contacted specifically for the purpose of voter registration prior to the election. Over 50,000 potential voters were contacted with at least one mailing and at least one phone call, and over 45,000 were contacted in-person by organizational staff about the importance of voting. 12 organizations planned or participated in a local candidate forum focused on disability issues. 7 organizations created and distributed a voter guide based on candidate questionnaires addressing disability issues. 16 organizations offered transportation to the polls, through either their organization's accessible buses or by referral.

2006 was a year of enormous growth showing great potential for the Missouri Disability Vote Project to bolster its long-term sustainability and become a powerful unifying force in the disability community.



Disability Vote Summit attendees check out new electronic voting machines.

as high as 70%. Experts and media point to a tight race between U.S. Senate candidates Claire McCaskill (D) and incumbent Jim Talent (R) as a major source of voter turnout. The candidates ran neck-and-neck in a race just too close to call right up until about 1 a.m. the morning after Election Day. Heated debate regarding a state constitutional amendment protecting stem cell

Honorariums & Memorials

In honor of Charles Derleth

Mrs. Betty Jacobsen

In honor of Jacqueline B. Harris

Clinton Harris

In honor of Kathleen Lee

Marketing Horizons

In honor of Bernie Litt

Ms. Pearl Dusky

In honor of Max and Colleen Starkloff

William J. Bollwerk

In memory of Jason DeSalvo

Mr. and Mrs. Andrew DeSalvo

Mr. Lucky Leong

Mr. and Mrs. Dennis Smith

Mr. and Mrs. Timothy McDonough

Mr. Lynn L. Tubbesing

In memory of Roger Griffin

Red Hats

In memory of Doris Richardson

Dellwood Sixty Plus Club

*If you are interested in making an honorarium or memorial, please contact:
Janet Tillmon, Director of Development at 314/289-4238 (voice) or 314/289-4252 (tty).*

Adopt-A-Family **A Paraquad Tradition**



Each holiday season the Paraquad staff coordinates the Adopt-A-Family Program where our organization provides gifts for the children of our participants. For the past 9 years, Paraquad has helped to bring holiday cheer to nearly 70 local families through our Adopt-A-Family Holiday Program.

Throughout the year, the Adopt-A-Family committee works with staff to develop fundraising events to contribute towards the purchase of gifts and holiday food baskets. Thanks to the fundraising efforts of Paraquad employees and donations by Paraquad board members we were able to honor the wish lists of 46 children from 10 families.

To be eligible for the program, families must have at least one person with a disability in the household, have at least one child under the age of 16 years in the household, and have not received gifts through the program during the previous year.

Paraquad's 2007 Legislative Agenda

Public Policy Update

Paraquad's Public Policy Department advocates for policies and programs that create opportunities for people with disabilities to be integrated in the social and economic mainstream. Our 2007 legislative priorities include increasing access to affordable health care and expanding home and community-based options, including consumer-directed services. We will also be working to promote additional public policies, such as employment and housing, which empower people with disabilities to live productive lives and participate in community activity.

Health Care Access: Advocate for access to affordable health care, attendant services and assistive technology for low-income people with disabilities, workers (past and current) with disabilities, families of children with disabilities and seniors.

- Restore access to durable medical equipment, supplies and therapies necessary for people with disabilities to live independently and work.
- Maintain and expand access to consumer-directed personal attendant services for people with disabilities who work or have worked but still cannot afford the high costs of personal attendant services.
- Remove barriers to work for people with disabilities by creating access to health care, attendant services and assistive technology/durable medical equipment and supplies.
- Remove barriers to independent living for people with disabilities who have worked in the past.
- Increase access to affordable health care for small businesses and employers.

Special Education: Advocate for full funding necessary for local school districts to provide quality education and accommodations for students with disabilities in the most integrated setting.

State Budget: Oppose TABOR, legislation that would impose a spending limit on all appropriations and only allow for growth based on a population-growth-plus-inflation formula. The TABOR formula would not be adequate to allow the state to maintain year after year the same level of programs and services, thus causing cuts in the state budget.



Housing: Increase access to accessible, affordable housing.

- Support the Lifetime Homes bill that creates a state incentive for developers who use universal design features and a tax credit for modifying an existing home.

Transportation: Protect state funding for transportation services for people with disabilities and seniors. Although state funding for transportation is limited, there are programs such as MEHTAP (Missouri Elderly and Handicapped Transportation Assistance Program) that give funds to community organizations to purchase accessible vans and provide transportation services.

Independent Living Fund: Increase the fund or appropriate additional General Revenue for Centers for Independent Living in order to bring Missouri CILs to the national average.



For additional information on Paraquad's Public Policy Department, contact our Information and Referral line at: 314/289-4200 (voice) or 314/289-4252 (tty).

To sign-up for the Missouri Advocates with Disabilities Empowerment Network (MADEN) visit www.paraquad.org for online registration.

Utility Bill Assistance Available

If you require assistance with your utility bill, Paraquad might be able to help you. We offer utility assistance through three funding sources, including Clean Slate, Dollar More, and FEMA (Federal Emergency Management Agency). Individuals needing assistance must meet the following criteria:



Clean Slate

- Must be a senior age 55 years or older
- Low-income
- AmerenUE customer
- Must be able to pay a small portion of the bill

Dollar More

- Must already receive services from a Paraquad program
- Low-income
- Can receive assistance no more than 3 times in one year
- Assistance cannot exceed \$600

FEMA

- Utility bill must be in the name of the individual requesting assistance
- Individual must be able to pay a portion of the bill
- Assistance is provided for only one utility



To request utility assistance, contact Information and Referral at 314/289-4200 (voice) or 314/289-4252 (tty).

Youth Education Advocacy

Expansion Of Youth And Family Services

By Stephanie McDowell, Education Specialist

Paraquad's Youth and Family Program has expanded its services to include Education Advocacy. Our Education Specialist can work with youth and their families on IEP (Individual Education Plans) or other education advocacy issues. Services are open to children and youth with disabilities from birth to 21 years old.

Paraquad's Education Specialist provides support to parents and students during the IEP process. This includes consultation before and after an IEP meeting to help educate parents and students on the IEP as it pertains to the IDEA (Individuals with Disabilities Education Act). Staff members will also be available to attend IEP meetings to assist parents and students in negotiating their way through the meeting. For example, a staff member recently visited school district officials with a young participant and his family to support their requests for accommodations for his disability.

"I have been through the IEP process myself and really know what the barriers are for students and parents going through

Special Education," said Stephanie McDowell, Education Specialist, "I know the importance of having the right supports in a classroom can be to the success of a student moving from high school to the adult world. As a result, I have a real passion for helping parents and students learn to advocate for themselves."

In addition to assisting parents and students through the IEP process, Paraquad's Education Advocacy Services assist students who are preparing to graduate prepare for their transition. The Education Specialist is available to meet individually with students and parents to discuss career exploration, work, job training college and other resources that will help make that transition easier.



**If you would like additional information on Paraquad's youth and family services, contact our Information and Referral line at:
314/289-4200 (voice)
or 314/289-4252 (tty).**

**Check out Paraquad's New Web site:
www.paraquad.org**



PARAQUAD

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Paraquad is a non-profit organization under
 Section 501(c) 3 of the IRS Code.

The ACCESS newsletter is available in alternative
 formats upon request. Contact 314/289-4200
 (voice) or paraquad@paraquad.org for more
 information.

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Save the date!
March 28, 2007
Disability Rights Legislative Day
Jefferson City

Upcoming Events

February 20

12:00pm-1:30pm
 Family Participation
 Program Meeting

March 20

12:00pm-1:30pm
 Family Participation
 Program

March 2

6:00pm-8:00pm
 Youth Group Meeting

March 28

Disability Rights
 Legislative Day

March 10

10:00am-1:30pm
 IDEA Boot Camp

March 29

10:00am-1:30pm
 IDEA Boot Camp

March 12

12:00pm-2:00pm
 Women's Support
 Group Meeting

April 6

6:00pm-8:00pm
 Youth Group Meeting

March 15

3:00pm-5:00pm
 Vendor Demonstration
 Adaptive Sports and
 Recreation

April 9

12:00pm-2:00pm
 Women's Support
 Group Meeting

March 15

6:30pm-7:30pm
 Parent's Support Group

April 27-29

People First
 Spring Conference



**For additional information,
 contact Paraquad at:
 314/289-4200 (voice)
 314/289-4252 (tty)**